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U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
FEMA Region 6  
800 N. Loop 288  
Denton, TX 76209-3698



## FEMA

May 24, 2011

The Honorable John Cook  
Mayor, City of El Paso  
2 Civic Center Plaza, 10th Floor  
El Paso, TX 79901

RE: Flood Risk Study Project Update – El Paso County, Texas

Dear Mayor Cook:

On March 10, 2011, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Administrator, Craig Fugate, issued the Agency's formal response to inquiries concerning FEMA's current analysis methods for communities affected by levees. FEMA received an inquiry from members of both the United States Senate and United States House of Representatives. In his reply, Administrator Fugate committed to assess the approach currently used to analyze areas behind non-accredited levees and develop alternative approaches to modeling the flood hazards in these areas on Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs). Administrator Fugate also committed to a temporary hold on the issuance of Letters of Final Determination (LFDs) for communities impacted by levees or levee systems which employed the current approach for non-accredited levees.

Although the analysis, modeling, and flood hazard mapping of these levee areas have been placed on hold to develop additional approaches, the flood risk which these levee systems were built to reduce still remains. As our Agency develops new analytical approaches to mapping the impacts of levees, we trust that you will continue to promote flood risk awareness and local preparedness to the residents within your community.

To avoid undue cost and confusion, this letter is intended to inform you of the effects of this decision on your community and the countywide study currently underway. Since portions of the study area may be impacted by FEMA's current approach for non-accredited levees that is currently being assessed, FEMA is placing the study within your county on hold until the alternative levee modeling methods have been prepared and released for implementation. The other communities included in that study affected by Administrator Fugate's decision are:

- El Paso County
- City of Socorro
- Town of Anthony
- Town of Clint
- Village of Vinton

The Honorable John Cook

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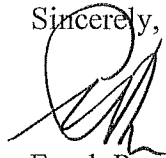
Page 2

Please understand that FEMA is not seeking regulatory changes to Title 44, Chapter 1, Section 65.10 of the Code of Federal Regulations (44 CFR 65.10) during this process. Levee owners and/or the associated communities should remain engaged in flood risk management activities and will still be required to provide levee certification for the levees to be shown on the map as accredited.

If you are currently preparing the required certification documentation, or if your community is currently working to rehabilitate or construct required improvements along the levee system, please continue your progress on these activities and inform FEMA of any schedule updates or milestones reached.

We hope this information helps clarify the current status of your study and how FEMA will progress in the future. If you have any questions, please contact James Orwat, of our FEMA staff in Denton, Texas, by telephone at (940) 898-5302 or by e-mail at [James.Orwat@dhs.gov](mailto:James.Orwat@dhs.gov).

Sincerely,



Frank Pagano  
Mitigation Division Director

Enclosure: Treatment of Levees in Flood Risk Studies

cc: R. Alan Shubert, Floodplain Administrator, City of El Paso  
The Honorable Kay Bailey Hutchison, U.S. Senator  
The Honorable John Cornyn, U.S. Senator  
The Honorable Francisco Canseco, U.S. Representative  
The Honorable Silvestre Reyes, U.S. Representative  
The Honorable Jose Rodriguez, State Senator  
The Honorable Carlos I. Uresti, State Senator  
The Honorable Marisa Marquez, State Representative  
The Honorable Naomi Gonzalez, State Representative  
The Honorable Chente Quintanilla, State Representative  
The Honorable Joe C. Pickett, State Representative  
The Honorable Dee Margo, State Representative  
Susan Gant, USACE Albuquerque District  
Michael Segner, State NFIP Coordinator  
Nicole Friedt, Study Manager, MAP 6  
Philip Beasley, External Affairs Director, FEMA Region 6  
Stephen Altman, RAMPP-RSC6